

## TRANSITION FROM COMBAT TO STABILITY OPERATIONS: UNITY OF EFFORT

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**TRANSITION FROM COMBAT TO STABILITY OPERATIONS: UNITY OF EFFORT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This research project examines how unity of effort effects the transition from combat to stability and reconstruction operations in campaigning. This research will first define unity of effort through an analysis of Joint and U.S. Army doctrine. Next, the project will review key guidance and document provided by senior leaders across the USG to include the President, Department of State, and Department of Defense to determine how the interagency has envisions achieving unity of effort. Finally, this work will use a “harmonization framework” to examine unity of effort during the recent transition process in Iraq by exploring the actions and challenges faced during the planning and execution of Iraq’s reconstruction. The research project concludes by answering the question of how United States Government improves its effectiveness in the transition from combat to stability and reconstruction operations through improving overall interagency unity of effort.





## TRANSITION FROM COMBAT TO STABILITY OPERATIONS: UNITY OF EFFORT

If you concentrate exclusively on only the victory, with no thought for the after effect, you may be too exhausted to profit by the peace, while it is almost certain that the peace will be a bad one, containing the germs of another war

—B.H. Liddell Hart<sup>1</sup>

In all, significant progress has been made throughout Iraq, but most military and civilian leaders acknowledge that the tactical successes of the of Iraq war have not and cannot achieve strategic victory. The rapid defeat of the Iraqi Army in 2003 removed the Bath regime, but under-resourcing and lack of unified effort caused a stalemate and decline in U.S. success in both security and development areas through 2006. In response, a surge of 15 additional Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) in 2007 achieved many tactical victories in displacing Al Queda and establishing security, but continued challenges in civil-military planning and integration continued to be ineffective. Failures to properly organize, resource and plan for post-conflict operations have led to a disjointed stability and reconstruction effort which has failed to capitalize upon tactical achievements. This lack of unified organization, planning and coordinated execution has led to continued challenges in maintaining security, providing essential services, and enforcing the rule of law throughout Iraq while fostering the ingredients for an insurgency. After six years in Iraq our plan to transition still lacks unified effort.

Over the past year several United States Government (USG) agencies have issued reports that underscore the need for Department of State (DoS) and Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a comprehensive strategy to transition operations in Iraq. The consensus was that there was much good work being done in the field, yet the current transition strategy suffered from a lack of unity of effort and suboptimal support

in several critical areas. In all, this lack of unity is not just in approach and direction by two different branches who lead these efforts, but has been perpetuated by the lack of effective and cohesive organization among the agencies and elements working to integrate security, governance development, humanitarian assistance and essential services.

This project will examine attempts by the United States Government (USG) to achieve unity of effort in Iraq between 2003 and 2007, and how the diversity of agency approaches, organizations and resource levels impacted the ability and proficiency of DoD and DoS elements to work effectively together in the transition from combat to stability and reconstruction operations. This research will first examine USG policy and military doctrine to define “unity of effort” through an analysis of key Presidential, Department of State, Department of Defense and other government reports and documents, and to determine how the various agencies interpret requirements to cooperate with one another to achieve unity of effort. Additionally, this work will examine previous experiences in Iraq by examining the key organizational responsibilities and relationships involved in Iraq’s reconstruction to include Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I), Multi-National Corps Iraq (MNC-I), and the State Department’s Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA). Finally, we will look at recommendations on how to improve unity of effort within the USG capabilities and increase proficiency to transition from combat to stability and reconstruction operations.

### Defining Unity of Effort

The ability to transition effectively from combat into stability and reconstruction depends on developing effective and clear policy and strategy through a unified “whole

of government approach” that originates from a common understanding of the crisis and a shared agreement towards the strategic objective. This “whole of government approach” creates the common understanding and sense of purpose that underlies “unified action.” As defined in the military’s Joint Publication 1, unified action is the “synchronization, coordination or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.”<sup>2</sup> Towards this end, effective action originates from multiple services and agencies creating an environment of cooperation within which strategic guidance and leadership must be a more effective “forcing mechanism” that ensures competing and diverse interagency interests are aligned. This is especially important when several USG agencies and organizations participating in an operation and are not under the direction of a single, unified command structure.<sup>3</sup>

The challenge inherent in achieving “unified action” in civil-military areas is found in the differing approaches favored by each actor: civil agencies are more comfortable in developing cooperative relationships, while military organizations prefer more directive authorities inherent in “unity of command.” Coordination and cooperation toward common objectives, when the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization requires extensive integration and willingness of efforts to achieve unified action. In all, the operational dynamic that is essential is that all share a commonly developed view of the operational environment and problem, and are committed to achieving common ends even though their methods, resources, etc may diverge significantly. Army Field Manual 3-07, “Stability Operations,” calls this a “comprehensive approach”.<sup>4</sup> The problem with relying upon an environment of

cooperative willingness for effectiveness lies in the inability to direct decisions and ensure cooperation even when participants disagree. For this reason, military commands charged with stability and reconstruction operations prefer “command authority” by a single lead agency to ensure goals and objectives are nested, prioritized and synchronized across the security, humanitarian assistance, and emergency reconstruction requirements of a campaign when competing views, priorities and individual agency equities are in play. As defined in Title 10, US Code, “command authority” notes that:

... is exercised only by commanders of unified commands unless otherwise directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense. Command authority cannot be delegated and is the authority of the combatant commander to perform those functions of command over assigned forces, assigning tasks and designating objectives and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the mission assigned the command.<sup>5</sup>

However, “command authority” that might be present in an interagency cooperative environment is not the command relationship described above. Instead, the more correct term would be more along the lines of exercising “directive authority.” In this, a designated lead agency is given the authority to direct the objectives and required actions of the campaign through a more nuanced approach of senior personal relationship building, consensus building, and resource prioritization, all of which the lead agency is empowered to direct in order to gain needed cooperation. Many interagency organizations that participate in operations with the military operate at their own discretion, influenced by personal agendas, institutional bureaucracy, and organizational cultures; the abilities to direct compliance without continually challenging and fighting against these organizational factors is key to success.<sup>6</sup>

Although many uniformed leaders would desire that the civilian organization and structures be made similar to military ones, reaching unity of effort and action within the interagency cannot be achieved through simply adopting military rules and requirements for command and control. Leading within the interagency control structure is “described as more of an art than science”<sup>7</sup>, in that it relies upon developing cooperative approaches among equals as each agency of government stand as its own entity, not compelled to follow the guidance and direction of another. Military organizations can add some structure, particularly within the planning and execution processes, that can assist in achieving unity of effort. However, short of Presidential direction or Congressional legislation, there are no interagency command structures or doctrine defining, relationship authorities, organization or structure of command and control to achieve unity of effort.<sup>8</sup>

#### Achieving Interagency Unity of Effort

The success of reconstruction and stability(R&S) operations requires key civilian capacities of the USG interagency, to include both DoS and DoD, to plan with and work effectively with the international community to stabilize and reconstruct the host nation.<sup>9</sup> However, in the initial stages of Iraq, many of these USG civilian agencies came with poor organizational structure and little ability to plan and organize to lead and support R&S efforts. In an effort to mitigate institutional weaknesses, personal agendas and domestic politics President Bush issued guidance for future R&S operations, designating DoS as the lead of agency for reconstruction efforts:

The purpose of the NSPD 44 is “to promote security of the United States through improved coordination, planning and implementation of stabilization and reconstruction assistance [in] foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”<sup>10</sup>

In this National Security Presidential Directive - 44 (NSPD 44), the President directed that the NSC deputies committee establish an interagency policy framework for preparing, planning for and conducting stabilization and reconstruction activities. NSPD – 44 also directed that DoS ensure harmonization with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations across the spectrum of conflict.<sup>11</sup> In support of better R&S efforts, the Secretary of Defense issued DoD Directive 3000.05 that ensured all military commands should prioritize stabilization and reconstruction activities at a level comparable to combat operations.<sup>12</sup> However, while these efforts are encouraging they do not break down separate agency priorities and does not get at breaking barriers created by differing organizational culture and competing agendas and personalities. To create truly unified effort, it is crucial to “harmonize” efforts across the interagency at strategic through tactical levels,<sup>13</sup> this new harmonization must be achieved through four major efforts: coordinated planning, committed leadership, the use of lead agencies, and sound coordination mechanisms.

Coordinated early planning between military and the interagency for post-conflict operations is vitally important. When coordinated planning to transition responsibility from military to civilian entities does not occur the result is always the development of military and civilian parallel efforts which seek to either secure or develop the host nation.<sup>14</sup> Instead, efforts must start with unified vision of how both can be accomplished simultaneously and in a complementary manner from the termination of major combat operations out through, and including, the transition to reconstruction operations. In all, coordinated interagency planning builds a sense of urgency, delegates tasks, assigns

responsibility for objectives, and establishes timelines to transition from military to civilian agencies.

Equally essential is committed leadership that begins at the national level and must include the host nation. Strong, focused strategic leadership establishes the goals and objectives and directs the establishment of functional organizations that ensure success. Cooperation between military and civilian agencies begins with leadership that focuses on building teamwork and consensus for mutual action, and influences organizations with diverse goals and cultures to work together towards shared objectives. Strong leadership at all levels ensures coordinated planning begins early. With unity of effort, established by committed leadership, organizations work through differences, and shape decisions to achieve common goals and reach the desired end state.<sup>15</sup>

The use of a lead agency mandated by the President provides direction and authorities needed to coordinate actions and solutions across the interagency, request and prioritize resources, and to provide oversight of the day-to-day conduct of an ongoing operation. Although use of a lead agency does not confer “command,” it charges the most appropriate and capable agency to coordinate activities, insure information dissemination and orchestrates coordination to avoid duplication of effort. Although a lead agency does not have the authority to require action, they can effect the coordination necessary to synergize the interagency effort.

Finally, establishing sound coordination mechanisms that facilitate discussion, information sharing and coordination allows the commander or lead agency to engage participating agencies. Examples of coordination bodies and groups consist of

Executive Steering Groups, Civil Military Operation Centers and Joint commissions for special projects. The purpose of coordinating mechanisms is to exchange information, receive operational guidance and information concerning policy. Members include leadership and representatives from each agency.

Without the employment of such efforts as these, little coordination occurs at the working/operational levels, with the objectives and tasks that effect multiple efforts being husbanded and “stove-piped” within agencies with little coordination between responsible offices. In this case, coordinated planning occurs only at very senior levels and more often than not decisions are “made by committee” when groups focus on developing solutions focused more on internal politics than coordinating efforts to develop a comprehensive approach. Such internal conflicts drive the spirit of cooperation to a halt, and develop solutions that focus only on the easy or unimportant tasks in order to gain consensus and compromise.<sup>16</sup>

#### Historical Example: Challenges of Unity of Effort in Iraq

To illustrate the previous points, the following pages will analyze the agency perspectives, organizations, and planning/actions that impacted interagency unity of effort in Iraq between the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad , Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I), and subordinate organizations during reconstruction and capacity building in Iraq in 2003-2007. Together, these elements were charged with building Iraqi security and governance capacity at the national, provincial and local levels essential to achieving the strategic goals of the commonly developed “Joint Campaign Plan.” In all, the breadth and depth of effort necessary to achieve the desired end states was clearly beyond the reach of any single USG agency. Thus, success required integrated and



coordinated effort across the Department of State, the Department of Defense and other USG agencies, working in partnership with the Government of Iraq (GOI)<sup>17</sup> enable Iraq to achieve self reliance. To examine the unity of effort in Iraq, we will use the harmonization framework explained above of integrated planning, committed leadership, use of lead agency, and establishing sound coordination mechanism.

From the beginning in Iraq, the failure to develop a clear, common political - military vision of success prevented civilian and military leaders from developing a common understanding of the problem ahead, and in developing a strategy with effective, integrated lines of effort to reach these desired ends. Responsibilities for reconstruction were compartmented and prevented a unified effort to establish security and provide lasting stability. Uncoordinated planning resulted in competing priorities and as a result reconstruction efforts among different agencies were ineffective. The failure to organize and integrate military and civilian efforts created confusion and prevented a smooth transition to achieve a decisive victory.<sup>18</sup> Cooperation and integration occurred at the strategic level, however, because of organizational structure, personnel problems, and competing objectives between the military and civilian understanding of the problem, cooperation was sporadic at the operational and tactical level.<sup>19</sup>

#### Lack of Integrated Planning

As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted in October 2005, the strategic vision for Iraq was moving from a stage of transition toward the strategy to prepare a permanent Iraqi government for a decisive victory. The vision had been developed mutually between a broad range of strategic thinkers, civilian

and military, inside and outside of government. In all, the vision that would drive future planning focused on three major elements:

Clear the toughest places – providing no sanctuaries to the enemy and disrupting foreign support for the insurgents.

Hold and steadily enlarge the secure areas, while integrating political and economic outreach with coalition military operations.

Finally, build truly national institutions by working with more capable provincial and local authorities. Iraqi institutions must sustain security forces, bring rule of law, visibly deliver essential services, and offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future.<sup>20</sup>

In all, planning would focus on security first to clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely, and to build durable, national Iraqi institutions. Success could not be achieved by either military or civilian action alone – success would require integrated civil-military partnership.

However, coordinated planning in Iraq between military and civilian agencies had long been a problem. The military had nested and synchronized planning from MNF-I headquarters to BCTs along several lines of operation, with the primary focus on eliminating active threats and fostering security in order to establish conditions under which provincial control could transition back to the GOI.

The problem would be that there had been little effective planning on the civilian side for developing and establishing reasonable, sustainable governance that was capable of sustained, legitimate independent functions. In all, the gauge of success for transferring sovereignty and control of a province to GOI officials would be on the level of success by coalition and Iraqi forces in “clearing” and securing, and not upon the ability of the local Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the GOI to “hold” and “build” after security primacy was transferred. As planned by MNF-I, the decision to transfer

provincial control back to the GOI was determined by the Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR). Participants of the JCTSR include the appropriate Multi-National Force division commander and provincial governor, assisted by representatives of the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense, and embassy representatives of the U.S. and United Kingdom. The decision to transfer control was based on four criteria; the current threat assessment, Iraqi Security Force capacity, local governance capacity, and MNF-I ability to respond quickly to support the Iraqi Security Forces<sup>21</sup>. Detailed synchronized transition planning in support of the JCTSR decision between the MNF-I and the U.S. Embassy was non-existent.

In retrospect, synchronization of MNF-I and U.S. Embassy efforts along common line of operation would have provided the critical linkage necessary to assess stability and maintain momentum in the reconstruction efforts after U.S. forces withdrew to “overwatch.” The Office for Provincial Affairs (OPA), the responsible office inside the U.S. Embassy for reconstruction, and Multi National Corp – Iraq (MNC-I), the subordinate military headquarter under MNF-I, did not conduct coordinated planning and in execution did not have coordinated transition and assessment plans. In an effort to move the process of transferring control as quickly as possible to Iraqi leaders, MNC-I established Joint Common Plans (JCP) that did not include OPA. The JCP established milestones, objectives and timelines, and attempted to create the critical linkage from national reconstruction objectives to efforts in the provinces and local municipalities. The JCP nested goals and objectives of the strategic Joint Campaign Plan, written by MNF-I and promulgated through coordination with the US Embassy as the overall guiding plan forward in Iraq.<sup>22</sup> Somewhat left behind in the planning process due to a

lack of manning and planning capabilities, OPA did not issue guidance or direction towards reconstruction or stability at all.<sup>23</sup> OPA was very concerned with being consumed by the more robust military planning efforts, and as a result resisted participating in coordinated efforts with MNC-I ; in fact, OPA tasked subordinate Provincial Reconstruction Teams to “create their own direction” where they felt military plans were not on track.<sup>24</sup> On several occasions, because of no coordinated planning, reconstruction efforts between the OPA and MNC-I were actually moving in direct opposition.

This lack of unified and coordinated planning complicated problems further when the U.S. leaders in Iraq made decision to relinquish responsibility across provinces back to the GOI. The JCTSR transition directive did not allow for a gradual transition policy within provinces that gradually withdrew coalition security forces as conditions improved and governance and developmental efforts showed that they were no longer vulnerable to attack. Once a transition directive was issued by the JCTSR, a “post-transfer security agreement between MNF-I and the provincial governors” was established and coalition forces departed while PRT’s remained. The negotiations for these agreements rarely if ever included members of OPA, and were mostly a military and security-based decision. The Post-Transfer Security Agreement focused on coordination requirements with the provincial governor in the event MNF-I was needed to conduct further combat operations and mostly ignored considerations for further security for capacity building by Provincial Reconstruction Teams to ensure good unbiased governance and essential service continue, as well as efforts aimed at assisting the continued development of Iraqi Security Forces. Not surprisingly, once the transfer of responsibility went to the

GOI all critical support from the coalition to PRT's for capacity building ended.<sup>25</sup> The cessations of support to OPA field efforts caused by abrupt vice gradual transitions severely restricted OPAs ability to continue to move freely in a worsening security environment and continue to properly conduct its reconstruction mission.

In Iraq the integrated planning effort was disjointed. The U.S. Embassy and MNF-I and their subordinate organizations did not have a common understanding of the problem. Responsibility for goals and objectives were not assigned to transition smoothly from combat to reconstruction and stability operations. Coordination with all USG agencies and the GOI to establish a mutually CIV-MIL focused transition timeline across Iraq did not occur. While OPA was looking to assist the GOI in building long-term capacity, the military was planning on a much shorter time frame for success -- for establishing initially security and quick action projects that set the essential, initial conditions required to transition responsibility to Iraq and show progress within rotating units' year-long deployments.<sup>26</sup>

#### Lack of Teamwork Oriented and Committed Leadership

The opposing organizational cultures and objectives for success between DoS and DoD, a variety of leadership styles among civilian and military leaders, and parallel, unconnected organizational structures creates many challenges to effective teamwork and mission success. The biggest difference between civilian and military cultures in Iraq was the different expectations among senior leaders of how and when to transition operations in the individual provinces. Additionally, the unclear command relationships, and dual reporting chains of command between MNF-I and the U.S. Embassy,

frustrated leaders at all levels and created confusion of who was in charge during the various phases and aspects of planning and operations.

The U.S. Embassy and MNF-I did not effectively integrate the leadership of all USG and Coalition agencies, offices, and organizations involved in national and provincial reconstruction. Diverse objectives and expectations for success between the senior leaders in the MNF-I and Embassy created confusion and polarized the actions among subordinate organizations and staff officers. The military expected a greater sense of urgency and cooperation from their Embassy counterpart than they were often manned, trained and organized to supply. In contrast, Embassy leadership and staff felt the military put too much emphasis on combat operations aimed at security and not enough focus on development and transition strategies to build long term governance and economic capacity in Iraq.

There was a clear disconnect and disparity of capacity with military counterparts in how OPA organized and provided guidance and direction to the provincial reconstruction effort. In contrast to a layered, robust military organization from national down through provincial to local levels, OPA was structured as a flat organization with 23 subordinate PRTs reporting straight to the director. This flat organization structure did not align well with MNC-I organized in typical military fashion with strategic, operational and tactical headquarters that had both resources and capacity to build effective relationships with their GOI counterpart's appropriate offices. The mismatch between OPA and MNC-I headquarters greatly limited cross - coordination below the strategic level, and created unrealistic expectations among Iraqi leadership at all levels as Iraqi's turned to military commands rather than PRT's for many critical matters.<sup>27</sup> In

sum, OPA was not staffed properly to conduct the equivalent level of operations as MNC-I that left many military leaders frustrated with the Embassy because of poor understanding of command relationships and the mismatch of responsibilities, goals and objectives on the civilian side of efforts in Iraq.

#### Failure to Properly Designate and Optimize the Use of a Lead Agency

On several occasion the question of “who was in charge of redevelopment and capacity building” in Iraq surfaced between military and civilian headquarters. At the strategic level, it was unclear who was responsible for the over-all development and reconstruction in Iraq. The U.S. Embassy designated OPA as the lead office to coordinate capacity building at the provincial level,<sup>28</sup> but OPA failed to nest and synchronize the goals and objectives at the national level with those to build capacity at the provincial and local level. Also, a diversity of leaders from a variety of agencies within the U.S. Embassy, MNF-I, and MNC-I conducted individual and often uncoordinated discussions and planning with Iraqi ministerial leaders and provincial governors. This created confusion with Iraqi leaders on coalition goals and intent, and often duplicated or contradicted the promises and efforts of other USG agencies and representatives. As mentioned earlier OPAs flat organizational structure and lack of planning and coordination capabilities prevented effective oversight of intra-governmental and provincial reconstruction coordination. Moreover, OPA lacked independent, robust funding which diminished their ability to provide support and influence development activities on the ground. Finally, the promulgation of “lead agency memorandums of agreement” (MOA) between MNF-I and the U.S. Chief of Mission at the Embassy led to further confusion. These MOA’s gave lead responsibility

for political and economic development on the ground to the PRTs, and required commanders on the ground to provide security and movement support, but did not enable commanders to influence PRT political and economic planning and execution. This disconnect directly impacted how the commander could use political and economic development incentives and programs to build relationships with local leaders as a key element of improving the security situation.

Regardless of who was designated as the “lead” in an area, the military commander on the ground was seen by Iraqi officials as their most influential American counterpart. Because commanders controlled funds for immediate impact and reward among the community through the Commander Emergency Response Program (CERP), the ground commander maintained the greatest amount of influence over the battle space.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, local PRT leaders that were designated as the lead in political and economic development were not given similar resources and lacked equal influence based on their capability to support projects and reward performance. The ground commander’s overarching concern security and controlling the battle space, and consequently used their superior resources towards these ends and not long term development.<sup>30</sup>

Designating a lead agency by line of operation ignores the requirement to coordinate security, emergency humanitarian assistance and essential services requirements necessary to achieve synergy *across all line of operations*. The tension between the military and the Embassy in establishing a lead agency affected the spirit of cooperation among many organizations especially at the local level. This diminished



cooperation effected information sharing and the willingness to cooperate in the several coordinating committees established to enhance a shared vision of cooperation.

### Establishing Sound Coordinating Mechanisms

There were several attempts at establishing effective coordinating mechanisms to share information and coordinate activities across the various USG and multinational agencies responsible for reconstruction and capacity building. One such coordination mechanism established to share information, develop policy, and coordinate operational decisions was the Joint PRT Steering Group (JPSG). The JPSG, under the direction of the OPA director, was responsible to ensure proper synchronization of all USG and coalition partner plans, operations and resource commitment in provincial capacity building that included governance, economic development, reconciliation and rule of law.<sup>31</sup> Under the JPSG was an action-officer working group called the Joint PRT Working Group (JPWG) which developed issues and conducted coordination and planning to ensure military operations were synchronized with GOI national development efforts.<sup>32</sup>

The failure of this body as a coordinating mechanism is a good example of the inability of MNF-I and Embassy organizations to develop and utilized effective working forums. From the start the JPSG was not organized well and began to falter. At the first meeting a consensus could not be reached regarding who would take the lead to coordinate reconstruction and development. OPA rejected several offers by MNF-I to assist in planning activities and coordinate future operations. Additionally, OPA rejected several recommendations to establish a national development strategy that would nest with provincial efforts, create a series of “Joint Common Plans” across functions and

provinces, and suggestions to reorganize and align political structure with military structures. In all, OPA was so undermanned that without the help of the JPSG membership and the associated working group OPA was not able to manage the reconstruction requirements needed to accomplish their strategic objectives. Several organizations provided liaisons officers to OPA to assist in reconstruction management as well as to help coordinate planning efforts in their designated area of operation. This liaison effort was intended to improve information sharing, and synchronizes efforts with PRTs.<sup>33</sup>

Many senior officers within Iraq suggested that OPA should reorganize and create a “Civil-Military Operation Headquarters” to share information with MNC-I. Under this proposal, the MNC-I staff would assist OPA in planning and management of the reconstruction effort. While many thought that enhancing OPA efforts through the use of the MNC-I staff would improve OPA's ability to move from being simply a reporting agency to an enabling agency, OPA again rejected this move. While these capabilities were sorely needed, OPA was unwilling to accept military assistance because such a move would risk having the civilian led effort subsumed within a larger military organization. In all, the continued friction between the need for increased planning and operational effectiveness and the desire to retain and assert civilian control over operations in Iraq would prevent the creation of structures that would facilitate and enhance unity of effort, while alleviating critical personnel shortages, coordination issues and misuse of limited resources.<sup>34</sup>

## Recommendations

The need to integrate interagency coordination below the national policy level has increased the requirement for development of an interagency doctrine. The complexity of future operational environments, globalization, and the speed at which information travels demands new ways to approach the “projection of civil – military power”.<sup>35</sup> The separate organizations within the interagency, confronted with changing operational requirements, needs a common language to approach the complex problems they face. As the line of separation between combat and reconstruction become blurred an effective and well articulated whole of government approach is badly needed to achieve strategic success.<sup>36</sup> No longer can one organization, such as DoD, be expected to do it all; we must rely on our collective USG efforts to carry our tactical and operational victories to strategic success. The lessons we have learned in Iraq should not be repeated. As a minimum we should establish a Joint Interagency cooperative process that addresses four particularly noteworthy issues. First, establish a combined Joint-Interagency education system that begins early in individuals careers and continues through senior service. Secondly, develop an integrated planning relationship that unifies critical areas early in the campaign design – security, humanitarian assistance, essential services, and political development, etc. Third, establish interagency relationships that define supporting and supported authorities below the strategic or national level. Finally, structure our interagency relationship to better assist the national, provincial and local infrastructure.

Related to effective interagency unity of effort is improving interagency training and education. Much of the difficulty in overcoming interagency cultural differences, and diverse views of mission successes can be improved through developing a combined

professional education system and looking for ways to train together. An integrated interagency education system will improve inter-organizational understanding between agencies and develop systems to enhance interoperability in planning, coordination and cooperation. Finally, an interagency education system should look for ways to integrate leaders at every level of leadership.

Much work has been done to integrate interagency planning processes and relationships. Planning is difficult business, and development of an interagency planning doctrine would create a framework to effectively transition from military operations to reconstruction and stability operations. The goal of the interagency planning framework is to develop the host nation to become a self reliant viable member of the international community. Therefore, this integrated planning relationship should be focused on developing a host nation through a lead, partner and support construct. Establishing a common planning doctrine will reduce duplication of effort, create a common understanding of what needs to be accomplished, and assign roles and responsibilities to critical tasks and objectives. Finally, a common planning relationship will establish transition timelines that will improve unity of effort, establish a sense of urgency, build long term capacity, and over time reduce the requirement for long term military presence.

The USG should establish interagency authorities that define recurring and / or standard supported and supporting relationships. Critical to mission success is determining who is in charge at what stages of the operation. The current use of a “lead agency” designation has not included operational authority to require cooperation below the national or strategic level. Without establishing clear authorities such as supporting

and supporting relationship the interagency can not achieve improved unity of effort, especially in a lethal environment. Establishing lead agency authorities would enable partners to allocate resources more efficiently, and achieve better planning for establishing a stable environment. Relationships that define supporting and supported authorities with a clear interagency planning process would create synergy, minimize confusion at the national through local level, and establish unified approach to applying national power below the strategic level.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, both civil and military partners must structure the interagency operations to better match a typical host nation structure at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Many difficulties in Iraq stemmed from not having interagency partners fully integrated at national, provincial and local level of execution. Whereas, military organizations tend to be hierarchical, most other USG organizations tend to have more flat structures. Establishing a common operational framework and control elements improves coordination capabilities. For interagency cooperation to be effective, a common vision of engagement at the strategic, operational and tactical level must be developed to fully integrate military operations with reconstruction and stability operations at the national, regional and local levels. Establishing a commonly accepted framework diminishes the difficulty in coordinating operations, particularly with the host nation.

## Conclusions

To achieve unity of effort and create a whole of government approach to solve vital national security issues there are several challenges that must be overcome. To rely on a spirit of cooperative willingness in a complex lethal environment will not

achieve the cohesive unity of effort needed for future decisive victory. When working with the interagency a forcing mechanism must be established to coordinate supporting and supported relationships. Our interagency partners must increase capabilities to lessen the need for long term military involvement in post conflict operations. NSPD 44 and DoD Directive 3000.05 are a great beginning, but do not go far enough to ensure unity of effort among separate agencies. As B.H. Liddell Hart stated clearly 'concentrating only on the tactical or military victory with no planning on how to achieve the strategic success the peace you achieve will most certainly lead to another war'.<sup>38</sup> As seen in Iraq unity of effort is critical to achieving victory. Without interagency unity of effort to reach our strategic objectives victory will not be achieved.

Key partners, mainly the DoS and DoD, must be strategically, operationally, and tactically aligned in structures and planning capabilities to attain synergy. Integration at the most senior levels is inadequate and more needs to be done at the operational and tactical level. Understanding relationships and establishing counterparts will be crucial to minimizing confusion in future efforts. Relationships that have real authority must be established to create supporting and supported forcing mechanisms. More must be done to effectively enable transitions from combat to reconstruction and stability operations: civilian organizations must improve their operational capabilities; while military organizations must understand that long term success depends on our ability to set the conditions to enable our civilian agencies to continue beyond combat operations.

Since 2003 our ability to plan in an interagency environment has not ostensibly improved. Effective planning is crucial to achieving unity of effort, yet agencies continue to plan in isolation from one another. We do not understand each others capabilities nor

do we look for ways we can integrate our efforts. Agencies outside the military do not have the personnel or capacity to do many of the tasks asked of them. Cultural differences continue to affect a shared understanding of the problem and our ability to foster a cooperative environment. Without a common agreed upon planning relationship our senior leaders will continue to give conflicting guidance and direction. Without the ability to plan in an interagency environment, with a common understanding of terms, roles and missions, we will continue to have resourcing issues, and divergence of interests resulting in longer military deployments.

NSPD 44 and DoD Directive 3000.05 have changed the guidance for the operating environment within the interagency. The impact of these policies can not be understated. The DoS has been asked to increase its capabilities and change how it operates. The DoS Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability operations is developing new procedures to assist the field in planning, coordinating and executing reconstruction and stability operations in concert with other governmental agencies. Additionally, the DoD is struggling, in a limited resource environment, to increase reconstruction and stability capabilities equal to those for combat operations.

The struggle to establish an interagency whole of government approach to solving national security issues will continue unless we begin to integrate our unique capabilities and harmonize our collective efforts below the strategic level. Many of the obstacles obstructing civilian and military cooperation are too complex to rely on cooperative willingness to solve. Agencies have deeply ingrained organizational cultures and differences that will continue to prevent unity of effort, especially in a lethal environment, and will not simply go away as we further integrate operations to the

tactical level. Congress must get involved and pass legislation to break barriers that prevent interagency unity of effort.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (London, England: Faber & Faber Ltd, March 1991), 338

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chief of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, May 14 2007) GL-11.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Field Manual 3-07 (Washington DC, Department of the Army, October 2008) 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-5.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Chief of Staff, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-08 Vol. I. (Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Defense, October 9 1996) I-IV.

<sup>6</sup> William Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post Conflict Success", *Parameters* 33, no. 3 (autumn 2003) 103.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Chief of Staff, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-08 Vol. I. (Washington DC, U.S. Department of Defense, March 17 2006) I-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I-5.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO) Joint Operating Concept*, version 2.0. (Washington DC, U.S. Department of Defense, December 2006). 54.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of State, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization "Preventing and Responding to Conflict: A new Approach," briefing slides, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. October 28, 2008. 4.

<sup>11</sup> George W. Bush, *National Security Presidential Directive, NSPD 44; Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington DC: The White House, December, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Defense,; *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO) Directive 3000.05* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 28 2005)

<sup>13</sup> Flavin. "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post Conflict Success", 105.

<sup>14</sup> Joint Publication 3-08. (March 17 2006) I-13.

<sup>15</sup> Field Manual 3-07, 1-18



<sup>16</sup> Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post Conflict Success", 102.

<sup>17</sup> The author worked as lead planner to Strategy Plans and Assessment responsible for coordinating plans to improve unity of effort between MNF-I and US embassy Iraq June 2007 – June 2008

<sup>18</sup> Donald R. Drechsler, "Reconstructing the Interagency Process after Iraq", *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 2005) 16.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Multi National Force – Iraq (MNF-I): Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Appropriations Act September 2008. (Public Law 109-289 Section 9010; Public Law 110-252 Section 9204) 16.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations,: Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on Iraq and U.S. Policy of the Committee on Foreign Relations, October 19, 2005, 4.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Multi National Force – Iraq (MNF-I): Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Appropriations Act September 2008. (Public Law 109-289 Section 9010; Public Law 110-252 Section 9204) 32.

<sup>22</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Initial Impressions Report (IIR) Provincial Reconstruction Teams Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, December 2007) 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Multi National Force – Iraq (MNF-I): Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Appropriations Act September 2008. (Public Law 109-289 Section 9010; Public Law 110-252 Section 9204) 32.

<sup>26</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Initial Impressions Report (IIR) Provincial Reconstruction Teams Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, December 2007) 17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) allows battalion and brigade commanders to quickly inject money into their battle space to alleviate post-combat suffering of the community. Appropriately focused, these funds provide humanitarian assistance and restoration of essential services (to pre-combat levels). However, if used for improvement of infrastructure and capital investment beyond pre-combat levels, CERP may discourage the Iraq government from assuming this responsibility.

<sup>30</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Initial Impressions Report (IIR) Provincial Reconstruction Teams Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, December 2007) 16.

<sup>31</sup> In 2007 the author worked as lead planner Strategy Plans and Assessment MNF-I responsible for coordinating plans to improve unity of effort between MNF-I and US embassy Iraq. A critical piece of this plan was establishing coordinating mechanisms to facilitate information sharing and linkages to national reconstruction efforts.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Liaison officers from various coalition units interviewed by author, Baghdad, Iraq, July 2007 – June 2008.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command Forward Support Element "*In Progress Review Provincial Reconstruction Teams*," briefing slides, Baghdad, Iraq, Multi National Force – Iraq Headquarters, 27 April 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Hard Lessons; The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office,. February 2009) 342.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Joint Publication 3-08, (17 March 2006) I-3.

<sup>38</sup> B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (London, England: Faber & Faber Ltd, March 1991), 338